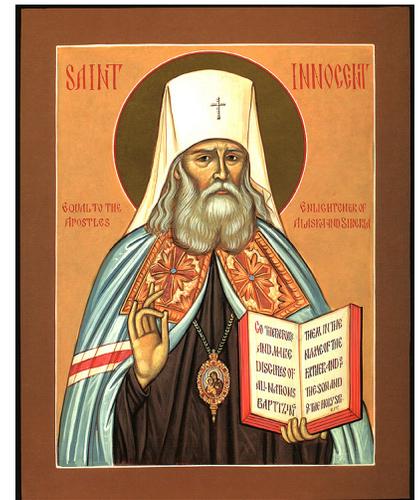


## NOVEMBER 2016 Heirs of Saint Innocent

*They will speak to one another in repentance, and in anguish of spirit they will groan and say, "This is the man whom we once held in derision and made a byword of reproach – we fools! We thought that his life was madness and that his end was without honor. Why has he been numbered among the sons of God? And why is his lot among the saints?"*

*"So it was we who strayed from the way of truth and the light of righteousness did not shine on us, and the sun did not rise upon us. We took our fill of the paths of lawlessness and destruction, and we journeyed through trackless deserts, but the way of the LORD we have not known." (Wisdom of Solomon 5:3-7, read for the Feast of St. Innocent of Alaska, 6 October)*

We enter into the month when Americans celebrate Thanksgiving Day. In the past couple of weeks, we have been reflecting seriously on stewardship and it's place in our lives, and we also celebrated the memory of great American saints: St. Tikhon, First Archbishop of New York, St. John (Kochurov) of Chicago, who served Holy Trinity Cathedral there before returning to Russia and becoming the first martyr of the Bolshevik revolution, and St. Innocent, Apostle to America and Enlightener of the Aleuts. As we prepare to, hopefully, offer more than turkey and football in thanksgiving to the Lord for all His blessings, we should reflect a bit more on the challenges of living as heirs of these great saints, especially St. Innocent.



St. Innocent of Alaska (at the time Fr. John Veniaminov) was an amazing man. In a time when travel was thought to be long when someone went to the next town, he journeyed across the whole continent of Asia, crossed the Bering Sea and came to Sitka, Alaska as the priest in charge of the Alaskan Mission of the Russian Orthodox Church. At a time when priests were cultivating and propagating the Russian Orthodox faith, Fr. John was translating the Gospels into the Aleut language so the natives could understand the Word of God. At a time when churches were being built by groups of faithful, many skilled at labor, etc., Fr. John built churches in Alaska with his own bare hands, so the natives could witness the liturgy and be baptized. At a time when the "comforts" of travel meant a carriage or, at worst, a bare horse back, Fr. John lowered himself into the hull of a kayak and traversed the rivers, bays and seas throughout Alaska, paying for it later on in life with legs so swollen and sore from the frigid waters that he could barely walk. At a time of life when most people begin to think of settling somewhere for good, he travelled back to Russia, answering the call of his Church, and returned later as the Bishop of Sitka, only to return once more and die as the Metropolitan of Moscow.

But perhaps the most amazing thing about St. Innocent was his vision. When he came to North America, the assignment was a very difficult one. The missionary diocese was untamed, the natives very often would just as soon kill you as listen to your words, and creature comforts were few and far between. But St. Innocent saw one thing – a place where the Kingdom of God and His Word could take root and grow. He didn't see "savages," he saw children of God; he didn't see mile after mile of untamed forests, he saw sites for future church buildings; he didn't see the

## THE MESSENGER

ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE ORTHODOX CHURCH • PO BOX 12635 • 5400 ANNIE OAKLEY DRIVE  
LAS VEGAS, NEVADA 89112-0635 • 702.898.4800 • WWW.LASVEGASORTHODOX.COM

# NOVEMBER 2016

St. Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church • Las Vegas, Nevada

<p>GREETERS</p> <p>Nov 6: CAMPBELL/OSBURN Nov 13: DEMKO/WHEELER Nov 20: MCAULEY/STAFFORD Nov 27: CHONG/MURPHY</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>2</p> <p>DAILY VESPERS, 6:30 PM ADULT FAITH FORUM</p>	<p>3</p> <p>ERITREAN SERVICE, 8:00 AM COFFEE CHAT, 10:00 AM</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>5</p> <p>GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS CHANGE CLOCKS</p>	
<p>6</p> <p>DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: YOUTH EPISTLE: YOUTH POST-COMM: YOUTH CHURCH SCHOOL</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>8</p> <p>DIVINE LITURGY, 8:00 AM ST. MICHAEL AND ALL THE BODILESS HOSTS</p>	<p>9</p> <p>DAILY VESPERS, 6:30 PM ADULT FAITH FORUM</p>	<p>10</p> <p>ERITREAN SERVICE, 8:00 AM COFFEE CHAT, 10:00 AM</p>	<p>11</p> <p>VETERANS DAY</p> <p>BAPTISM, 2:00 PM</p>	<p>12</p> <p>RUSSIAN CONFESSIONS, 9 AM SLAVONIC LITURGY, 10 AM</p> <p>GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS CHOIR REHEARSAL</p>
<p>13</p> <p>DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: HUFFMAN EPISTLE: BROOKS POST-COMM: WHEELER CHURCH SCHOOL</p> <p>RONALD McDONALD HOUSE DINNER</p>	<p>14</p> <p>BAPTISM, 10:00 AM</p>	<p>15</p> <p>NATIVITY FAST BEGINS</p> <p>PARISH COUNCIL, 6:00 PM</p>	<p>16</p> <p>DAILY VESPERS, 6:30 PM ADULT FAITH FORUM</p>	<p>17</p> <p>ERITREAN SERVICE, 8:00 AM COFFEE CHAT, 10:00 AM</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>19</p> <p>BAPTISMS, 11:00 AM</p> <p>GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS CHOIR REHEARSAL</p>
<p>20</p> <p>DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: BITSKO EPISTLE: STRANSKY POST-COMM: FESTAL VESPERS</p>	<p>21</p> <p>DIVINE LITURGY, 8:00 AM ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS</p>	<p>22</p> <p>FATHER JOHN OUT OF TOWN NOVEMBER 21-30</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p> <p>ERITREAN SERVICE, 8:00 AM NO COFFEE CHAT</p> <p>THANKSGIVING DAY</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26</p> <p>GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS</p>
<p>27</p> <p>DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: TESFAY EPISTLE: HOOD POST-COMM: W. DEMKO CHURCH SCHOOL</p>	<p>28</p> <p>FATHER JOHN OUT OF TOWN NOVEMBER 21-30</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30</p> <p>ADULT FAITH FORUM 7:00 PM</p>	<p>Dec 1</p> <p>ERITREAN SERVICE, 8:00 AM COFFEE CHAT, 10:00 AM</p>	<p>Dec 2</p>	<p>Dec 3</p> <p>GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS</p>

# St. Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

PO Box 12635  
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## RECTOR

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Father Stephen Osburn, Jr.  
(702) 521-6988

## CHOIR DIRECTORS

Matushka Elizabeth Dresko  
Grace Brooks  
Jarrod Huffman

## PARISH COUNCIL

Virginia Hood, Vice-President  
Karen Short, Treasurer  
Catherine Wilkalis, Secretary

Gregory Brooks  
James Brophy  
Kevin McAuley  
Karen Murphy  
Litsa Osburn  
Joseph Wheeler

## SUB-COMMITTEES

Building & Grounds  
Kevin McAuley

Eritrean & Ethiopian Outreach  
Tekeste Nuguru

Russian Outreach  
Natalia Minkoff

Church School/Youth  
Fr. Stephen Osburn, Jr.  
Amy McAuley

Fellowship Committee  
Charity Committee

Tower of Babel in the native language which was so difficult to learn, he saw the Pentecost of the Word of God being brought to the people in a way that they could grasp – much as the Lord told parables. So he worked, and worked, and worked – doing things like translating the Gospels, building churches, learning the language and preaching in it, urging the growth of the church southward and eastward. He truly envisioned the Orthodox Church in America.

And he left us heirs. The first and most prominent of those heirs was his future successor, Basil Belavin, to become St. Tikhon, the first Bishop of New York and later Patriarch of Moscow. St. Tikhon built on the vision of St. Innocent. Where St. Innocent translated the Gospels and services into Aleut so the natives could worship, St. Tikhon saw the need for the English language in order to make the Word of God alive in America. St. Tikhon built churches. St. Tikhon became the first bishop to travel regularly throughout the United States by train, by horse, etc. He consecrated Saint Bishop Raphael, who would have a special relationship with the Arab peoples, he worked with

Saint Fr. Sebastian Dabovich, who had a special relationship with the Serbs, he worked with the Greeks, with the Albanians, with the Bulgarians, etc., etc. He preached about the need for a special Orthodox Church in America, separate from the “old country,” and unified no matter what ethnic background a person came from. He began the theological schools, which come down to us today as St. Vladimir’s, St. Tikhon’s, St. Herman’s Seminary, etc. He had a vision.

Other heirs come to mind. Fr. Leonid Turkevich, to become Metropolitan Leonty, the first Rector of a theological school in America, and later a saintly image of piety and unity for the former Russian diocese moving towards independence. Fr. Alexander Schmemmann, in the words of Metropolitan Philip the “Father of Liturgical Theology,” a saint who returned the liturgy to us and showed us by his life of faith and work what the Eucharist is all about. Recent theologians and laborers for the Church, such as Frs. Meyendorff, Hopko, and Harakas, Serge Verhovskoy, Vesselin Kesich, etc. are also heirs.

But, perhaps unnoticed in all of this is that we are also heirs of St.

## AT A GLANCE...

**Nov 5: CLOCKS BACK ONE HOUR BEFORE BED!**

**Nov 8: Divine Liturgy, 8:00 AM, St. MICHAEL AND THE BODILESS HOSTS**

**Nov 12: Russian Confessions, 9:00 AM; Slavonic Liturgy, 10:00 AM**

**CHOIR REHEARSAL FOLLOWING VESPERS**

**Nov 13: Ronald McDonald House Dinner**

**Nov 15: NATIVITY FAST BEGINS; Parish Council Meeting, 6:00 PM**

**Nov 19: CHOIR REHEARSAL FOLLOWING VESPERS**

**Nov 21: Divine Liturgy, 8:00 AM, ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS**

**Nov 21-30: FATHER JOHN OUT OF TOWN**

**Nov 24: THANKSGIVING DAY**

**Nov 30: No Daily Vespers, Adult Class as usual at 7:00 PM**

**Dec 4: ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

Send email addresses and corrections to:  
[fatherjohn@lasvegasorthodox.com](mailto:fatherjohn@lasvegasorthodox.com)

Innocent. When he worked so very hard to plant the Vine of Christ firmly in this vineyard of America, he knew that those following him would have to care for it, water it, weed it, even prune it. He trusted in God to raise up the proper caretakers after he was gone. And whether we like it or not, that responsibility is ours today. How have we cared for the Body of Christ entrusted to us?

Look at the hardships that St. Innocent endured – do we, his heirs, measure up?

- When St. Innocent lowered himself into that kayak and began his journeys, it was a judgment on us. Do we gripe and mumble about the twenty minutes it takes us in our air conditioned (or heated) car to get to church?

- When St. Innocent struggled with the Aleut language and ruined his eyes by continuing to work even after dark by the pale light of a candle or the moon, it was a judgment on us. Do we read the Scriptures or even know our prayers in a language where not only God, but we also, can understand and reflect upon? Have we debased language to the point where we can curse and swear at each other in judgment, and then say “it’s only words?”

- When St. Innocent went out with his bare hands, took an axe and started hewing a place to build a church, later finishing the job by building it himself, it was a judgment on us. How well do we build up the Body of Christ? Do we participate in the work of the Church? Do we volunteer for various tasks? Do we honestly reflect and weigh how much of a financial gift we can share with Christ to enable His work to go on?

- When St. Innocent arose at the break of dawn each day to go and preach the Word of God somewhere new, it was a judgment on us. How

often do we waste time with trivial things such as TV, trashy books and gossip? Do we gripe when we arise for church, noting that “Sunday is the only day I can rest?” Do we offer hours of time to various projects like sports, relaxation, yard work, clubs, school, shopping, etc., but lack the time to give something back to God?

When St. Innocent came to America and began his work, all he saw was The Church – he didn’t see the “Russian” Church, he didn’t see a club for debating philosophy or morality, he didn’t see a “spiritual” water fountain, to be approached or drunk from at our leisure. He saw the Kingdom of God, he knew the Kingdom of God, and he gave us the Kingdom of God. Read the passage from the Wisdom of Solomon at the beginning again. St. Innocent stayed on the path of righteousness and gave us the map to that path and the vehicle in which to travel it. What type of steward have I been of the inheritance that has been entrusted to me?

*Father John*

#### FEASTDAYS

During November, we celebrate the following feasts:

**ST. MICHAEL AND THE BODILESS HOSTS**  
November 8

DIVINE LITURGY, 8:00 AM (TUES)

**ENTRANCE OF  
THE THEOTOKOS**

November 21

VESPERS FOLLOWING LITURGY (SUN)

DIVINE LITURGY, 8:00 AM (WED)

#### VACATION

Father John and Matushka Elizabeth will be away visiting family for the Thanksgiving holiday. Father will be away from November 21-30. Father Stephen will be holding down the fort

during this time. He may be contacted for any pastoral needs or emergencies that may arise: 702.521.6988.

#### PACIFIC STANDARD TIME

Please remember to **turn your clocks back one hour** on the evening of Saturday, November 5, before retiring for the evening. Pacific Standard Time resumes on Sunday, November 5. Our Arizonans will get an extra hour of sleep, while anyone here not making the change will be nice and early for liturgy!

#### SLAVONIC SERVICES

Father Alexander will be here on the customary second Saturday of the month (November 12). Russian language confessions begin at 9:00 AM. Slavonic Liturgy is scheduled for 10:00 AM.

#### NATIVITY FAST

The Nativity Fast begins on November 15, continuing until our celebration of the Liturgy of the Nativity on December 25. This time of preparation is a good counterbalance to the “holiday” temptations that our society throws in our face. *Please note that in the United States, the Church generally recognizes a relaxation of the fast for the Thanksgiving Day celebration.*

During the Fast, **all regular communicants** need to take the opportunity to come for the Sacrament of Confession as part of the preparation. Confessions are heard after Vespers on Saturdays and by appointment. **Father John does not mind making appointments!**

#### CHOIR REHEARSAL

Rehearsals for the choir are set for both Saturday, November 12 and Saturday, November 19, following Vespers. All choir members are asked to make every effort to be present.

## ANNUAL MEETING

Please note that our annual parish meeting will be held after liturgy on **Sunday, December 4**. All voting members of the parish are asked to make every effort to be present. Besides the normal business of the parish, we will be voting on a proposed amendment to our Parish By-Laws.

A Voting Member must:

- 1) Be at least 18 years of age.
- 2) Have had Confession and Communion at St. Paul's regularly, but at least once, this past year.
- 3) Have a signed financial pledge form on file with the parish.
- 4) Have been a member of St. Paul's for the previous twelve (12) month period.

## PLEDGE FORMS

Our 2017 Proposed Operating Budget (for approval at the annual meeting) and 2017 pledge forms will be distributed this month via email. Hard copies will be available in the vestibule. Please have your pledge forms back to Father or Karen Short by December 1.

## PROJECT MEXICO

It's on! We are going to be sending another mission team to Project Mexico next summer to help build a house. We ask everyone for their prayers first of all, and the magnificent financial support shown this past year. We already have our allotment of 20 volunteers filled, with a waiting list of those interested.

## FELLOWSHIP DATES!

**Mark your calendars** and join us for the following fellowship opportunities:

*Christmas Bake Sale:* Sunday, December 18, following Liturgy. More details to come.

*Chili Cookoff:* Saturday, January 21,

2017, following Vespers. Cooks, start your stoves!

*2<sup>nd</sup> Annual International Dinner:* May 20, 2017.

## ADULT FAITH FORUM

Our regular Wednesday evening adult discussion group continues. We begin with Daily Vespers at 6:30 PM, followed by one hour of discussion in the parish hall. This year's topic will be *The Parables of Christ*.

## FEEDING THE HOMELESS

Our next Feeding the Homeless project will be scheduled on December 17. We will begin to construct the lunches and bag all of the items which we distribute at 10:30 AM. We then take them downtown and distribute them and are usually done by 1:00 PM. Please join us! If you can donate any of the items needed for the lunches (or funds to provide such), it would be appreciated.

## ICONOGRAPHY

The next phase of our iconography project will be to complete the east walls of the church (to the left and right of the sanctuary). Renderings are available in the church hall and you are urged to take a look. This is a MAJOR project which will require substantial funding. The two renderings posted in the hall will cost \$36,000 each, a total of \$72,000. **We are once again accepting donations to the Icon Fund. Please consider making an offering above and beyond your normal support of the parish!**

## CHARITY

Our normal collections of food for Friends of the Desert continue. Needs: jelly, jam, peanut butter, canned fruit, canned tuna/chicken. Thank you!

## ORTHODOX VENDORS

A list of businesses that our parish uses or are owned and operated by Orthodox Christians (some parishioners). We provide this information for you to consider if you need services.

CB Air Conditioning  
Cedomir Blagojevic  
(702) 493-0295

Dolphin Court Salon & Day Spa  
7581 W. Lake Mead Blvd.  
(702) 946-6000

Kyklos Café (Greek food)  
Galleria Mall  
Sophocles Frangakis  
(702) 450-1515

Makeup and Hair Artist  
Natalia Kasimtseva (Baker)  
*(I travel to client location)*  
Text or call: (702) 336-8300  
View portfolio at:  
[www.facebook.com/NataliaKasBeauty](http://www.facebook.com/NataliaKasBeauty)

## PRAYER FOR OUR PARISH

We ask everyone to remember our parish in daily prayer:  
Lord, God and Savior of all, we thank You for the blessing of St. Paul parish in our lives. May Your word become alive in each and every one of us who strive to follow You. Please bless and multiply all the gifts – time, talent and treasure – which are given in thanks to benefit our mission and glorify Your name. Bless and multiply the givers and help us all to make present Your Kingdom. For You are the Giver of all that is good, O Christ our God, and to You we give glory, together with Your Father who is without beginning and Your all-holy, good and life-giving Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

## SACRAMENTS/SPECIAL SERVICES

Please follow these guidelines.

- Baptisms. A personal meeting

scheduled with Fr. John will be necessary to schedule any baptism requested.

- **Matrimony.** A date and time for weddings must be requested at least six months (preferably twelve) in advance. There will be premarital sessions for both bride and groom to attend.

- **Memorials (Panikhida).** Requests for a memorial must be made at least one week in advance. If possible, the service should be served on Saturday. Other requests will be met as pastorally possible.

### PARISH COUNCIL SYNOPSIS OCTOBER 18, 2016 MEETING

*Rector's Report:* Reported on his September trip to Metropolitan Council in Syosset, NY; deliberations were routine. Father attended to some necessary personal business in Connecticut upon conclusion of Council meeting. Attended Diocesan (Diocese of the West) Assembly in Los Angeles, CA 11-13 October. Business was routine.

*Associate Priest's Report:* Observed that this Diocesan Assembly was his first and gave him an interesting, inside look at how the church works. He celebrated Vespers there (on his birthday!)

*Vice President's Report:* Discussed condition of courtyard; woodchips keep blowing away exposing the plastic ground cloth underneath - he has staked the plastic down with no effect; there is a wind tunnel effect in that location. Landscaper suggested putting a hedge around the perimeter. Problem remains to be solved.

Palm trees at the south wall of the property (a concern by neighbors because of pests) have been removed.

*Treasurer's Report:* Karen Short

distributed our financials before the meeting:

Capital Fund: \$247.42  
Rainy Day: \$31,338.59  
Icon Fund: \$1,592.03

Income for September was \$22,215.27, with expenses of \$19,438.96 for a surplus of \$2,776.31.

#### YEAR-TO-DATE

2016 Inc	\$ 216,399.69
2016 Exp	\$ 186,191.02
Inc over Exp	\$ 30,208.67

All parish finances including accounts payable are totally current.

Karen suggested rolling the modest balance in the Capital Fund into the Icon Fund. No objections.

### COMMITTEES

#### *Buildings and Grounds:*

Kevin is traveling; no report, but will follow up on everything. Kevin needs assistance since the amount of work is too much for one person. Father will ask Catechumens Michael Hayden and Kimbel Halliday if they would be willing to help.

#### *Church and parish hall doors:*

Door installation delayed again due to Kevin's lack of time. Doors have been ordered and paid for in half; but to get the agreed upon discount Kevin would have to help install them.

*Parking Lot Wall Repairs:* No proposal received from the stucco technician yet. Since it has been 4 months since the wall was damaged, after discussion, council approved getting our own proposals for stucco and proceeding with repairs as soon as possible, submitting receipts to the insurance company. If the cost is not unreasonable, Joe Wheeler believes they will pay. Kevin McAuley and Joe Wheeler will coordinate.

*Sound Panels:* Fr John noted that ready-made, decorative sound

panels are available from Home Depot for a decent price by special order. A special workday would be held to hang the panels. Council members approved of the idea.

*Courtyard:* (see Vice President's report).

#### *Water District Complaint:*

Letter received from Water District threatening fines for a water leak at the northeast corner of the back lot. Father John and Kevin inspected but found no evidence of leaks. The water district has not responded to three attempts Father John has made to contact them to find out exactly what the problem is.

Fr John informed council: New palm tree growth has begun again at the east end of the back lot and will have to be dealt with. City water will be shut off to the church property temporarily on Saturday 10/22 from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm due to water line work, limiting restroom availability.

#### *Sound system in Church:*

Priests' headset microphones are 5 years old and having wire issues. Mike Mahoney, the sound technician, will acquire new improved headsets at a cost of \$400+ each.

*Charity:* Homeless feeding accomplished October 15 by approximately 15 to 20 parishioners. 150-160 lunches and 140 hygiene packs and pairs of socks distributed. Homeless people had been removed from their usual gathering place. Due to this dispersal and multiple charitable groups overlapping services, we will be looking into the possibility of alternative sites or projects. There is a balance of \$442.71 remaining in the expense fund. No future feeding date was set at this time.

*IOCC:* No report.

*Church School/Youth:* Trunk or Treat for parish children will take place after

Liturgy on Sunday, October 30.

Ronald McDonald House Outreach happens November 13 with an Ethiopian dinner served by 10 youth supervised by Amy McAuley and Bea Makunen.

Project Mexico: Father Stephen reports there are 24 interested for 2017. Cost is up \$50 from last year (\$540 vs. \$490). This will enable the houses to be equipped with indoor plumbing. Fundraising will begin in November. Deposit of \$100 per person is due in January. Balance due in April. Choice of available dates to be determined: either last week in June, or July 21–27.

*Eritrean/Ethiopian:* Resolved a kitchen issue with Tekeste.

*Fellowship:* Oktoberfest happens Saturday, Oct 29 after Vespers. Tickets still available; PayPal orders OK.

*Outreach/website:* Fr. Stephen has ideas for the website redesign and will forward to Fr John for review. It will include a password-protected parish directory.

*Russian:* no report.

*Stewardship:* Updated council on the status of our stewardship program: It is fairly well established; pledge forms are encouraged. However, only 66 people pledge. Those who tithe are really the ones paying the bills. In general people need to think more about being responsible, voting members of the church.

Jim Brophy made the suggestion that we should eliminate the stewardship envelope designated for “Annual Assessment” and repurpose it for “Icon Fund” since OCA has done away with the “head tax.”

## OLD BUSINESS

*Iconography:* reported still no response from Vladimir Krassovsky

about fixing the Icons in the sanctuary – project remains “status quo”.

*Greeters Training:* Father still planning to conduct training for ushers. May have to select a Sunday after Liturgy. New ushers are encouraged to volunteer.

*Sunshine Group:* Fr John envisions this group working to maintain support and fellowship with parishioners homebound or in hospital. They may help by getting meals to people and keeping up contacts by sending friendly notes, calls or cards to those who haven’t been in church in a while.

*Diocesan Assembly:* Fr John reported that all is going well in the diocese; proportional giving being accepted, finances stable and budget is balanced for both Diocese and OCA. The Diocese of the West (DOW) funds 13% of the OCA budget. Fr. John was re-elected as diocesan clergy representative to the Metropolitan Council. The next All American Council will be in St. Louis in 2018. There will be no parish assessment any longer for the All-American Council. The diocese will absorb these costs in the operating budget.

New information related regarding recent US Supreme Court decision to permit exemptions for SHRB (“Sincerely Held Religious Beliefs”): Provides some legal protection for religious organizations and churches to be exempt from performing things like same sex marriages and renting our facilities for similar purposes that are in opposition to Orthodox beliefs. We will approve it at the next council meeting.

## NEW BUSINESS

*By-Laws:* Distributed handout with proposed changes to Article IV Section 2 b) of the Parish By-Laws, regarding Terms of Office of Parish

Council Members.

Change (in bold) states:

Any member of the Parish Council **excluding the Treasurer**, who has served for (2) consecutive terms (six years) automatically becomes ineligible for re-election until one (1) year off the Parish Council passes. **The position of Treasurer shall be filled by a duly qualified voting member of the parish (skilled in finances and the reporting of same, and the appropriate software in use). The Treasurer shall serve at the discretion of the parish and rector, not subject to term limits.**

This proposal is due to the complexities of the Treasurer’s duties; many parishes that use term limits exclude this office from those limits. Council members discussed and agreed with this change in bylaws. Virginia Hood moved and Joe Wheeler seconded to approve and present this resolution for vote at the Annual Parish Meeting in December.

*Budget:* A meeting will take place at Fr. John’s residence to establish the proposed budget for 2017 on November 8 at 4:30 pm.

*Annual Parish Meeting:* Will take place on Sunday, December 4 after Liturgy. Jim Brophy and Joe Wheeler have expiring terms and are also eligible for another term. Election slate and budget is expected to be ready by the next Parish Council meeting.

*Next Council Meeting:*

Tuesday, November 15, 2016, 6:00 PM

## PARISH DIPTYCHS

This list of parish departed is to remind us all of those whom we love and miss and to spur us to remember them in our daily prayers. They will be remembered in the proskomedia before each liturgy.

## MONTH OF NOVEMBER

Jacquelyn George  
November 6, 2002

LemLem Tekle  
November 8, 2003

Mary Simkovich  
November 9, 2011

Konstantin Zaiats  
November 15, 1999

Jon Gregory  
November 17, 1998

Krsto Rosich  
November 19, 1993

Daniel Filimon  
November 20, 1999

Theresa Wilkinson  
November 21, 2002

Scott Irving Dotson  
November 25, 1991

## FATHER STEPHEN'S CORNER FASTING ON THANKSGIVING?

In today's society, keeping a strict Lenten fast is rarely a problem. We live in a time where food is at our abundance. It is far easier to fast today than it ever was in the early Church. I can easily go to Kyklos Greek Café and get a falafel sandwich during a fasting period because it is readily available. I do not have to grow my food, wait a period of time for it to grow, harvest/kill it, and then finally if everything goes well, eat it. This is a luxury that we, today don't have to worry about it. Furthermore, there are many of us who do not even eat turkey, apple pie, mashed potatoes, stuffing, and/or bread rolls for a variety of reasons outside what is called for on the Thanksgiving Feast. Our conscious efforts to prolonged health, weight loss diets, veganism/vegetarianism, gluten-free diets, etc..., also contribute to the lack of food struggle

in our culture. So if this is the case... the question must be presented on whether we should fast on Thanksgiving, in order to keep the standards of the Nativity Fast in place, or should we simply ignore it for just one day?

The answer, in my opinion, is that it is a decision you have to consciously, through prayer, by approval of your confessor, and through careful consideration make on your own. The majority of us in the Church have family members who are not Orthodox. They - and even us - have grown up celebrating Thanksgiving in a certain way that isn't something that can easily be changed because now we show up with our particular dietary rules. The problem isn't that we are now faced with dealing with a senseless debate with our non-Orthodox family members over food; it is that we often forget that a true fast is not even about the food. Fasting is about separating ourselves from worldly things that turn our focus away from God. Fasting isn't just about the food we forgo, but us also abstaining from petty gossip, judgment, gluttony, smugness, and self-righteousness. Our fasting is to be observed with piety, discretion, and consideration.

It is the consideration that I want to focus on here more than anything. Thanksgiving is a day where the unity of the family is the main focus. We are living in a time where the family model is quickly being destroyed and replaced with unhealthy, physical and spiritual relationships. The institution is under attack from all directions. However, the root of this feast is found in the communion of God and the human heart. It is a day to offer thanks to God for the blessings He has bestowed on our families and us and a day where it is an extension of the Lit-

urgy we celebrate each Sunday. The Eucharist, which literally translates from the Greek into Thanksgiving, is something we partake of every week to give thanks to God for giving us His Son, the Resurrection, and life in His Kingdom. As Orthodox, we are called to value this very unity and strength of our families with compassion and consideration. Considering the Eucharistic underlying of the feast it is here where an argument (and where my opinion is) could be made that it is okay to break the fast for one day.

I am not encouraging anyone to break the fast. As I said above, this is something that must be done through careful consideration, thoughtful prayer, and speaking with your confessor. I am saying however, that there are positive elements to breaking the fast for one day. The strengthening of the bonds of the family through sharing in communion with one another over a meal and enjoying our time with our loved ones is a far better witness to our Orthodox faith than focusing on the morsel of food on our plates. As St. Paul puts it, "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. (1 Cor. 10:31). And also in the words of Fr. Alexander Schmemmann (his final sermon I might add before his falling asleep which was spoken on Thanksgiving Day), "Thank You, O Lord, for our families: husbands, wives and, especially, children who teach us how to celebrate Your holy Name in joy, movement and holy noise." So share the day in with thanksgiving. Enjoy the day, spend time with your loved ones, watch a little football (in my case), but do all of it with modesty, and most importantly give thanks to God for all that we have because without Him, we would not be here to share in the Love and Goodness that He brings for us.